

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 5 OCTOBER 2021

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 19 OCTOBER 2021

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

Present

Cllr Paul Follows (Chairman)	Cllr Kika Mirylees
Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Mark Merryweather	Cllr Steve Williams

Apologies

Cllr Penny Marriott and Cllr Nick Palmer

Also Present

Councillor Jenny Else, Councillor Jerry Hyman and Councillor John Ward

EXE 28/21 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 September and the Special Meeting held on 22 September 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 29/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

EXE 30/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

EXE 31/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the Council.

EXE 32/21 LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES (Agenda item 6)

The Leader and Portfolio Holders gave brief updates on current issues not reported elsewhere on the agenda:

- The Leader welcomed the recent Pride in Surrey event which had been held in Godalming town centre at the end of September. It had been well attended by over 8,000 and he thanked the Waverley staff and Councillors who had supported the event. The event had emphasised the values held by the Council and provided an economic boost to the town centre. The Leader also thanked the staff involved in supporting the forthcoming by-elections in Cranleigh East and Dunsfold Parish and the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan referendum.
- Councillor Peter Clark, Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation and IT advised that a recent attack on the server by “bad bots” had brought the

Council's planning portal to a standstill. As a result a new layer of protection had been purchased in the form of software which could detect IP addresses of bot attacks and block them instantly.

- Councillor Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, Services and Brightwells advised that the consultation on LPP2 had opened on 1 October. The Planning Policy team were currently working on two important supplementary planning documents, one for Dunsfold Park and one for Climate Change and Sustainability and it was hoped to get these out to consultation in November and February/March respectively for adoption in the Spring/Summer 2022. The Brightwells development was due for a grand opening in 2022 and the South Street car park upgrade had been delayed to early next year to avoid interfering with Sainsbury's Christmas shopping period.
- Councillor Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services advised that on 7 September the Government had announced a new health and social care levy which would take the form of a 1.25% increase in national insurance contributions which are paid by both employees and employers. The Council had been assessing the impact of the levy on its own finances, which was likely to be around £130,000 annually before inflation. This was equivalent to a 1.2% increase in Council Tax or the entire budget for apprentices and trainees. There had been no additional funding from the Government announced and therefore the burden would fall on the Council to identify further efficiency savings. It was noted that Surrey County Council's national insurance liability was expected to be around £2.4m, Surrey Police's around £2m and there would be an impact on parish and town councils.
- Councillor Kika Mirylees, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture advised that local company had been engaged to carry out an options appraisal on the museum.
- Councillor Anne Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety advised that Bracknell Forest Borough Council would be the Council's new out of hours contractor. They were currently running the out of hours service for Guildford Borough Council and therefore had geographical knowledge of Surrey. The new contract went live on 1st October and the Business Transformation team was working on having one number which would switch automatically at the end of the working day to the out of hours service.
- Councillor Liz Townsend, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Parks and Leisure also welcomed the Pride event in Godalming which promoted the area commitment to equality. Use of leisure centres was increasing and people returning to previous activities. Vacancy rates were around 6.5% which were well below the national average of 14.1%. Funding was continuing to be distributed to those businesses most impacted by the pandemic and free business support and advice was being offered. The Economic Development team was working on a number of projects to promote the high streets and boosting the leisure centres. There was a concern over the impact of the rising cost of living on residents on lower incomes, particularly the cost of energy and fuel and the removal of the additional £20 a week on Universal Credit which represented a significant reduction in income to these families. It was noted that over 50% of those on Universal Credit were families with children. Arriva had announced the

closure of their Guildford depot which would affect bus services in the rural areas of the borough, although it was hoped that another provider would take over and the Council was working with Surrey County Council on this issue.

- Councillor Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability advised that all waste collection services had been maintained despite challenges experience elsewhere through the pandemic. However there was pressure in the system and officers were working hard with the contractor to maintain the services and build a level of resilience in the service. The Climate Change and Sustainability SPD was being developed and the first meeting of the Climate Emergency Board had been held on 22nd September. Procurement, planning and housing had been identified as three main areas of focus. The Council was working closely with environmental groups in respect of holding local events to raise awareness around the COP26 summit in November. The Council was engaged in the consultation on the Guildford to Godalming greenway. Work was being carried out on the Godalming gateway and the Hale trail which would promote active travel in the borough. Cycle storage would be constructed in Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh and suitable locations were being explored for Farnham. The Council was working with Surrey County Council on the provision of electric vehicle charging.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Unless specified under an individual item, there are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the reports in Part I of these minutes.

EXE 33/21 REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME: REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (Agenda item 11)

The Leader presented the report which set out a review of the Waverley Scheme of Members' Allowances carried out by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which the Council was required to establish under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended). He thanked the Panel for their work and their engagement on the issue of remuneration. Considering the current position with rises to national insurance contributions, cuts to Universal Credit and potential national and local tax rises to pay for the cost of the pandemic it would be improper for the Council to recommend any rise to the current Members' Allowances Scheme. Therefore it was proposed to note the report but to recommend to the Council that there be no increase at this time and it was

RESOLVED that the Executive recommends to Full Council that:

- 1. The report and recommendations of the IRP are noted.**
- 2. In view of the continuing significant pressure on the Council's budgets, there is no change to the Members Allowances Scheme until after the next Borough elections in May 2023, at which time the Scheme should be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.**
- 3. The annual indexation of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries continues from 1 April 2022 for up to three years.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended). A council can only rely on the agreed form of indexation for a maximum of 4 years before further review of the Scheme by the IRP.

EXE 34/21 PROPERTY MATTER: WEY COURT EAST PROPOSAL (Agenda item 13)

At 6.55pm it was, on the recommendation of the Leader, the Executive **RESOLVED** that, pursuant to Procedure Rule 20, and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public Page 5 be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in the report in the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972; namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

RESOLVED that the Executive recommends to full Council that the recommendation as set out in the exempt report be approved.

Reason: The reasons are set out in the exempt report.

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

The background papers relating to the following items are as set out in the reports included in the original agenda papers.

EXE 35/21 COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Agenda item 7)

The Leader thanked the Overview and Scrutiny committees for their comments and advised that both the comments related to an exempt item which would be coming forward at a later date and an item later on the agenda and the comments would be addressed as part of those discussions.

RESOLVED that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.

EXE 36/21 AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT IN WAVERLEY (Agenda item 8)

Councillor Anne Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety presented the report which set out the Council's plans and commitment to support Afghan refugees through the Home Office Resettlement Programmes. A support officer had been appointed and would be in place from the following week. They would help to set up the pilot scheme and work with the local community on integration. The pledge to support Afghan families was in line with the Council's vision to ensure housing was available to all in need.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor John Ward welcomed the report and encouraged the Executive and officers to keep up the pressure on the Government to ensure the funding continued.

The Leader welcomed the report and echoed the comments on the Government funding. He thanked all those involved and it was

RESOLVED

- 1. That the commitment to secure five to ten homes, in the Borough, to assist Afghan refugees, through the Home Office resettlement programmes over a two-year period, subject to the availability of suitable homes, be supported;**
- 2. That the recruitment of a designated support worker, for up to three years, be agreed and the costs expected to be met by central government funding; and**
- 3. That the addendum to the Housing Allocation Scheme to allocate homes directly to eligible Afghan refugees for a two-year period as set out at Annexe One be approved.**

Reason: The Government has two initiatives to assist Afghan refugees the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) launched April 2021 for former locally employed staff and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), launched August 2021 to assist vulnerable refugees who assisted the UK efforts and stood up for values e.g. democracy, women's rights, rule of law, freedom of speech.

The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people from Afghanistan in the first year of the resettlement programme and up to 20,000 over the coming years. Local Authorities have been requested to assist the programme by providing homes and support services for integration.

Waverley Council Members and residents have recognised the plight of and risk to Afghan refugees and have pledged to support the humanitarian initiative.

EXE 37/21 THE BURYS DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL STAGE 1 (Agenda item 9)

Councillor Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services presented the report which sought approval from the Executive to progress to the next governance stage of the Burys Development project and authorise funds to enable the project to progress to Stage 2. Stage 1 had considered options for the three sites of the Burys, the Crown Court car park and the Wharf car park. The objectives for the project embodied the Corporate Strategy and took into account the views of officers and Borough and Town Councillors. Three options had emerged which would be explored in more detail in stage 2. Dedicated channels would be established for elected representatives to feed into the project and he thanked all those who had contributed so far. The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holder for engaging with Godalming Town Council.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor John Ward welcomed the proposals. Councillor Liz Townsend welcomed the report and the recognition of changes in ways of working and the weight given to climate change considerations. The Leader reiterated that the proposals were grounded in the Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Andy MacLeod sought clarification on the meaning of the phrase of a “hotel style development” and the Portfolio Holder responded.

Councillor Steve Williams endorsed the sustainability elements of the proposals and welcomed the opportunity for a development which was in line with the Council’s commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the progress made on the Burys Development Project to date, as detailed in Annexe 1, be noted; and**
- 2. That a further budget of £15,000 to progress to Stage 2 be approved, to be met from the balance on the original approval and the Property Investment Reserve.**

Reason: To comply with approval and governance arrangements as defined within the PID.

EXE 38/21 NEW FUNDING PROCESS FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2022 TO 2025 - THRIVING COMMUNITIES COMMISSIONING FUND (Agenda item 10)

Councillor Kika Mirylees, Portfolio Holder for Health Wellbeing and Culture, presented the report which set out a proposed Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund process and documentation to operate the scheme. The scheme would replace the current Service Level Agreement scheme. Cllr Mirylees thanked the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its help in shaping the priorities of the scheme. Applications for funding would be assessed by an assessment panel against an agreed criteria to ensure funding decisions were made fairly and transparently. The Council had a strong track record of working in partnership with voluntary organisations in the delivery of services to the community.

The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holder and the officers involved for their work on this scheme. At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Jenny Else expressed concern that she had not been involved in the assessment document as a member of the independent panel; and that dates for the panel meetings had not been set up as it was likely to be a lengthy process. Councillor Else also expressed concern over ringfenced funding for youth provision, as this was the responsibility of the County Council; and the future of the community meals service in the event that any of the buildings used by the service did not receive funding.

In response, the Leader reminded those present that it was not usual for meetings to be scheduled before the process had been agreed by the Council. The Council had a duty to explore what it could do to help young people when it was felt that the statutory duty to provide youth services by the County Council was not being met.

In response, Councillor Mirylees advised that ringfencing was not being proposed, however if organisations came forward who wanted to provide services to young people then they would be given consideration. She drew the Executive’s attention to the report which set out the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the 16-34 age range and this section of the community needed support. The community

meals on wheels service would be retained and the Council would explore how to support organisations to deliver this more efficiently.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor John Ward congratulated the Portfolio Holder for her work on the proposals and welcomed the focus on youth provision. Councillor Liz Townsend also congratulated the Portfolio Holder and the officers involved, welcoming the proposals which would make the process more transparent and highlighting the success of the Friday Night Project. The Leader and Councillor Steve Williams echoed the comments made regarding youth provision and support for the proposals. In conclusion, Councillor Mirylees highlighted the enthusiasm of the officers involved.

The Leader echoed the comments made and it was

RESOLVED that the launch of the Thriving Communities Commissioning scheme as set out in the report be agreed.

Reason: To ensure that the Council's funding mechanism and approach to not-for-profit organisations meets the Council's corporate priorities, evidence-based community needs and takes into account the views of the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Service Level Agreement Working Group.

EXE 39/21 PROPERTY MATTER: TICES MEADOW, FARNHAM (Agenda item 14)

At 6.55pm it was, on the recommendation of the Leader, the Executive RESOLVED that, pursuant to Procedure Rule 20, and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public Page 5 be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in the report in the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972; namely Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

RESOLVED that the recommendation set out in the exempt report be approved.

Reason: For the reasons set out in the exempt report.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 7.01 pm

Chairman